

Louisiana Law Review

Volume 54 | Number 3

January 1994

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Repository Citation

Lee Hargrave and Frank L. Maraist, *Retirement: George Willard Pugh, Julius B. Nachman Professor of Law*, 54 La. L. Rev. (1994)

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RETIREMENT
GEORGE WILLARD PUGH
JULIUS B. NACHMAN PROFESSOR OF LAW

George W. Pugh is retiring from the University this spring semester after having been a member of the law faculty for forty-three years. It is especially appropriate that the editors of the *Review* dedicate this issue to him, for he served as an associate editor of Volume IX and was the long-time faculty editor of the *Review*. Indeed, many members will long remember the law review seminar he conducted in which they defended their articles from George's penetrating interrogation.

It is never an easy task to reminisce or ruminate, as Wex Malone would put it, on the life and professional career of an academic "giant." It is more difficult when the subject is one who has served as your mentor, colleague, and friend for several decades. But it is even more difficult to pass up the opportunity to memorialize your thoughts about someone who has contributed so much to our profession.

Since we were taught by George Pugh, we are fully aware that we should have the facts straight and that our logic should be impeccable. He has accepted no less from us as our teacher and as our colleague. When we offer less, we usually hear something about "ships passing in the night." And we know better than to be frivolous. Humorous, yes, but frivolous, no.

Memories of George Pugh as a teacher? Intense questioning, a "reverence" for the facts, an enthusiasm for the law, an almost incredible knowledge of his subject. But not all work. George reached out to his students and his former students as people. Students and graduates remember fondly those "brown bag" lunches, with the opportunity to share thoughts with Professor Pugh or a distinguished guest and to learn in a "relaxed" atmosphere. Still more remember those "class" bar-b-ques in Professor Pugh's spacious backyard, where perhaps the law school's camaraderie has been at its best.

Memories of George Pugh as a friend? Perhaps the best of these memories are shared by two (and perhaps three) generations of LSU graduates: the encouragement and assistance he provided in our efforts to succeed professionally. Needless to say, a good recommendation from George Pugh has been about the best credential a would-be lawyer or law teacher could possess.

Memories of George Pugh as a colleague? These thoughts come quickly to mind. In the faculty lounge, stimulating questions, gently encouraging his colleagues to think deeper and newer thoughts about old laws and old legal problems. In the faculty meeting, caution against impetuous decisions to which academics are wont and a continuing insistence that we strive for excellence as a Law Faculty and as a law school. In his office, as much time as a younger colleague needed to probe the senior professor's thoughts about the law and academia.

George also taught many of us about our larger interests, our being parts of families and institutional families. To know George means knowing George's Bayou LaFourche roots, and his Anglo ancestors, early Virginia settlers. To be around George is to see how Jean is so important a part of his very being and how their four sons, Bill, George, David, and Jim, were central to his life. He wanted to know about your family, too. Where you were from, who your parents were, where your ancestors came from, and which third cousins might be relatives on both sides.

Many of us also learned from George the values of the institutional family. Indeed, George's retirement marks an important transition in the history of the law school. He was in the famous postwar class of ninety-seven graduates. He was a student of and then colleague of the giants of the LSU Law School—Professors Bennett, Daggett, Dainow, Dakin, Flory, Harrison, Hebert, Malone, McMahon, Reynard, and Smith. His commitment inspired the new group of teachers that followed in his path. He has fostered our institutional memory as the custodian of our institutional common law.

George Pugh became a giant in the law despite a physical handicap—poor vision. But “handicap” is not the proper word. Neither, in the broader sense, is “poor vision.” He could see through an illogical or incomplete argument better than others. And his insight into the law of evidence, federal courts, and procedure is legendary. Most important, George didn't think he had a handicap. And his students certainly didn't think so. They were too busy thinking about how to answer those famous Pugh questions.

Many of you who read this will have your own reminiscences of George Pugh. Those stories, undoubtedly, have been handed down to young associates. Certainly they are shared whenever classmates of the last four decades at the LSU Law School gather, in twos and threes or at reunions. Those shared stories illustrate that, in a way, teaching is much like carving a small niche of immortality. Sometimes teaching is mediocre and the former students have no memories. Sometimes the teaching is bad and the memories are sour. All too seldom, the memories are like those we have of George Pugh. Those memories, shared by so many of the thousands of students, lawyers, and judges who he has taught and counselled over the years, assure him of a special kind of immortality. We will miss his presence as a colleague, but will always remember his guidance.

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